(c) the specific reasons for not utilizing the amount by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) External Development assistnace received during the last three years was Rs. 14,254.31 crores in 2000-01, Rs. 17,075.15 crores in 2001-02 and Rs. 15,205.69 crores in 2002-03. Details of the project-wise utilisation of funds is available in the website of Ministry of Finance at www.finmin.nic.in/caaa.

(c) External assistance is largely tied to projects. Therefore, utlisation of the sanctioned assistance for any project is spread over its implementation period. As a result, there would be some unutilised amount at any point of time due to various reasons, which will be used as project implementation progresses.

Duty Exemption on Equipment

34. DR. ALLDI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Media Group has sought duty exemption on a range of equipment for technical upgradation; and

(b) if so, the action taken on their demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) No request from the Indian Media Group for duty exemption for equipment for technical upgradation appears to have been received in the Department of Revenue as per available record.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a).

Institutional Financial Investment in Uttaranchal

†35. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of institutional financial investment in Uttaranchal;

(b) whether the Ministry of Finance is taking some special steps to increase investment through financial institutions and banks in Uttaranchal; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) sanctioned an amount of Rs. 821.70 crores and disbursed Rs. 406.08 crore till end of September, 2003.

IFCI Ltd. sanctioned an amount of Rs. 232.31 crore and disbursed Rs. 232.31 crore till 31st March, 2003.

Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI) have informed that they have, till date extended financial assistance to 7 projects to Rs. 26.69 crore in Uttaranchal.

Industrial Investment Bank of India Ltd. (IIBI) has infromed that as on 31st March, 2003, an amount of Rs. 14.50 crore was outstanding as financial assistance provided by IIBI to 8 industrial units now located in the state of Uttaranchal.

Infrastructure Development Finance Company Ltd. (IDFC) has informed that the Government of Uttaranchal and IDFC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore enabling initiatives in infrastructure development to harness the potential in hydro-power, tourism and other areas in Uttaranchal.

Export Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) has informed that while Exim Bank does not have any loans outstanding as on date in respect of companies/units located in the state of Uttaranchal, Exim Bank has taken several initiatives to promote exports from the State, particularly for the agriculture sector.

NABARD has informed that they have been providing refinance support to commercial banks, RRBs and Cooperative banks in the state for increasing ground level credit flow, besides loan assistnace provided to the State Government from RIDF for completing/strengthening the rural infrastructure in the state.

National Housing Bank (NHB) has informed that the NHB provides refinance assistance to eligible primary lending institutions against the individual housing loans extended by these institutions.

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has informed that upto 31st March, 2003, they have sanctioned and disbursed a sum of Rs. 250.36 crores and Rs. 165.14 crore respectively to SSI Units in the State of Uttaranchal.

(b) and (c) Banks and FIs extend financial assistance to all eligible and viable projects of industrial concerns irrespective of location of the projects.

Postal charges for Outstation Cheques

36. SHRI S.K. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether banks not only take commission but Rs. 25 as postal charges also for ever outstation cheque (OSC);

(b) how much charges private banks are taking for every OSC; and

(c) what are the reasons for not crediting OSCs by using E-mail for exchange of information in the age of telecommunication, information technology?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL) : (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that with effect from September, 1999, commercial banks have been permitted to fix their service charges independently with the prior approval of their Board of Directors. Banks were advised that while fixing service charges for various types of services like charges for cheque collection etc. they should ensure that charges are reasonable and not out of line with the average cost of providing these services. Further, banks should also take care to ensure that the customers with low volume of activities are not penalized.

(c) The information is being collected and, to the extend available, will be laid on the Table of the House.

Rising Fiscal Deficit

37. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman of the Twelfth Finance Commission has warned against rising deficit which would adversely affect economic growth;

(b) if so, the present position of deficit in relation to GDP as compared to the last year; and